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ABSTRACT

The revised edition of "The New Model Me" is an affective curriculum based on Ojemann's "Causal Approach to Behavior" that assists youngsters to understand how needs and personal resources interact within a particular immediate physical setting to produce behavior. In addition, the curriculum attempts to teach key concepts and principles and to improve students' reading efficiency and comprehension. After 18 weeks of curriculum exposure (during January to June, 1982) 422 students from 11 classrooms in several states, representing grades 8-12, were assessed on curriculum specific and general social science content, attitudes toward self and significant others, and reading comprehension and efficiency, to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. Revised forms of the first edition's knowledge examination and the Personal Attitude Survey (PAS) were used. Reading comprehension and efficiency were assessed by corresponding subtests of the Iowa Silent Reading Tests (ISRT). Analysis of the results showed that the curriculum was highly effective in all areas, except in attitudes and reading efficiency. Reading comprehension showed significant improvement for already strong readers but no improvement for low readers. A site-by-site analysis of results found that significant results were more likey to occur in classrooms taught by teachers who had prior experience with the program. (Author/BL)

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# EVALUATING A SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIOR CURRICULUM FOR ADOLESCENTS: AN ATTEMPT TO PRODUCE BOTH AFFECTIVE AND COGNITIVE GROWTH

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Evaluating a School-Based Behavior Curriculum for Adolescents: An Attempt to Produce Both Cognitive and Affective Growth

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ABSTRACT

Few curriculum developers attempt to integrate cognitive and affective purposes within a single product. The development and evaluation of the second edition of The New Model Me is a clear exception to this generalization. The New Model Me is an affective curriculum built around the late Ralph Ojemann's "Causal Approach to Behavior" that assists youngsters to understand how needs and personal resources interact within a particular immediate physical setting to produce behavior. However, the curriculum also attempts to teach key concepts and principles and to improve students' reading efficiency and comprehension.

An experimental/control evaluation study after eighteen weeks of exposure to The New Model Me prototype was implemented in eleven teacher's classrooms during January - June, 1982. Students were assessed on curriculum-specific and general social science content, attitudes toward self and significant others as well as reading comprehension and efficiency.

Findings established that highly significant treatment effects were present in each knowledge dimension; no significant differences were found in attitudes. The objective to achieve reading improvement at least as regards reading comprehension also was met as evidenced by post-test significant differences in favor of the experimental group. These differences were present in stronger readers. All significant results were more likely to be found in classrooms taught by teachers who had prior experiences with the program.

Evaluating a School-Based Behavior Curriculum for Adolescents: An Attempt to Produce Both Cognitive and Affective Growth

## Introduction

The debate between the "cognitivists" who argue that knowledge and skill improvement is the key to self-concept enhancement and the "affectivists" who reverse the priority continues. However, too few curriculum developers have attempted to integrate the two domains within a single product. (Fraenkel, 1981) Even fewer have accepted the responsibility to evaluate what they have created. The development of the second edition of The New Model Me and its field evaluation is a clear exception to those generalizations.

The first edition of The New Model Me was developed in 1968-70 by a team of educators from the Lakewood, Ohio School District and the Educational Research Council of America (ERCA). The first edition was a product of the educational agenda of the late 1960's. Conceived as an affective, self identity program and relying on values clarification strategies and human relations exercises, The New Model Me was designed to assist adolescents to examine their own behavior and the behavior of others. Its underlying theory was based on the important work of the late Ralph H. Ojemann, a psychologist at the University of Iowa and at the Educational Research Council of America. Professor Ojemann conceived of and popularized the "Causal Approach to Behavior" which he translated into a Behavior Equation that assists youngsters to understand how an individual's needs and personal resources interact within a particular immediate physical setting to produce behavior. (Pritchett, 1973) As students participated in The New Model Me

activities focusing on self-esteem, values, controls, and decision-making they practiced and gained greated competency in applying the Behavior Equation to life's typical and critical decision situations.

The first edition was evaluated extensively to determine if students who were exposed to the curriculum understood the nature of the Behavior Equation, whether it changed their attitudes toward self, the home and the school and whether attitude change was accompanied by less destructive behavior assessed through examination of attendance, tardiness and discipline records. The evaluation evidence was sufficiently compelling to secure validation in 1974 as an exemplary program by the Joint Diffusion Review Panel (JDRP) of the then U.S. Office of Education. Following validation, The New Model Me was funded as one of the original Developer/Demonstrator Projects in the National Diffusion Network where it remained until 1982.[1] Thus, nearly 5,000 educators and over 100,000 students were exposed to its goals and activities through official adoption of its materials and training procedures.

In 1980, the Lakewood, Ohio School Board received educational foundation financial support to produce a second edition. Authors were selected and labored for a year and a half, until December, 1981, to produce a prototype version. The second edition of The New Model Me was conceived as a daily use, semester-long program comprising five teaching units; "Human Behavior", "Self-identity", "Controls", "Decision-making" and "Change: The New Model Me." The program in the form of a student text, together with a teacher manual, is scheduled for publication by Teachers College Press in June, 1983.

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[1]The New Model Me was excised from the NDN in May, 1982 along with a dozen other "controversial" projects by Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement, Donald J. Senese. Although approved by NDN program officers and reviewers, Secretary Senese maintained that "the continuation of The New Model Me project is not in the best interest of the Federal Government."

Although the second edition retains the affective emphasis of the first edition with its reliance on Ojemann's Behavior Equation, the second edition attempts to accomplish cognitive goals as well. The second edition contains, in contrast to the first edition:

1. Greater depth and scope of conceptual instruction with more attention to learning social science concepts such as role, status, stereotypes, propaganda and monopoly.
2. Material reflecting social concerns as well as personal concerns--ageism, sexism, unemployment, handicapism.
3. A substantial effort to improve student retention of key concepts and principles taught in the curriculum through devices such as clear objectives repeated at the conclusion of each unit for review purposes and highlighting of key "words and expressions."
4. A totally new addition of reading improvement as a curriculum emphasis through stressing the importance of reading efficacy as a human resource. The vehicle chosen to produce this improvement is a combination of curriculum related stories and essays, read with the assistance of the PARS Study Reading System (Purpose, Ask, Read, Summarize). Students are introduced to the system in Unit II and practice often with it. Teachers are given appropriate direction for use of PARS in the Teacher Manual.

In summary, The New Model Me authors believed that they had created an integrated curriculum with intent to reach both psycho-social and cognitive goals.

Description on the Evaluation Study

During the period January-June, 1982, eleven teachers in several states agreed to teach the prototype version of The New Model Me to at least one classroom of high school students for a treatment duration of 18 weeks. In all but two cases, the treatment teacher selected a second class in the same curriculum area as a non-equivalent control group.

All the treatment teachers were volunteers, some of whom had experience with the first edition; others had no exposure to the first edition but expressed an interest in participating in a field trial of the second edition. All teachers received from a few hours to two days of pre-implementation orientation to the curriculum. A description of each community/school and classroom included in the study is shown in Table I. In all, 422 students provided usable data for the study--280 students were included in the experimental condition with 142 included in the control group.[2]

In respect to race there were no breakdown differences of any magnitude between the experimental and control groups. Based on a teacher reported sample (N=338), there were 69% Black students, 30% Caucasian in the control group, while the experimental group consisted of 72% Black students, 27% Caucasian students.

In respect to sex, the differences were somewhat greater. Based on a sample of student self-reports (N=301) there were 51% males, 49% females in the control group while the experimental group consisted of 67% males, 33% females.

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[2]In some cases, students were present for either pre or post testing but not for both. Such students were eliminated from the data analysis. In other cases, information was mismarked on the computer answer sheets. Where the computer program (SAS) was unable to classify a case or a variable it was eliminated prior to data analysis.

TABLE I
Locations and Characteristics of Sample Classrooms

| SITE NUMBER | SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY NAME | SCHOOL TYPE | NUMBERS OF STUDENTS | CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | New Berlin, Wisconsin | Suburban/Rural | 14 | Learning disability class. No comparison group available. |
| 2 | Tiffin, Iowa | Rural | 30 | Counseling group. Comparison group comprising students from same pool. |
| 3 | Shaker Heights, Ohio (High School) | Suburban/Urban | 25 | Student in an alternative school program paired with a comparison group in the same setting. |
| 4 | Shaker Heights, Ohio (Junior High) | Suburban/Urban | 30 | Counseling group. Comparison group comprising students from the same pool. |
| 5 | Shaker Heights, Ohio (Junior High) | Suburban/Urban | 7 | Counseling group. No comparison group available. |
| 6 | Wichita, Kansas | Urban | 48 | Social studies class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |
| 7 | Lakewood, Ohio | Suburban/Urban | 40 | Social studies class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |
| 8 | Charleston, South Carolina | Urban | 46 | Social studies class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |
| 9 | Cleveland, Ohio Magnet High School | Urban | 37 | Social studies class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |
| 10 | Cleveland, Ohio (High School) | Urban | 106 | Social studies class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |
| 11 | South Vermillion, Indiana | Rural | 39 | Home economics class paired with a comparison group in the same curriculum area. |

TABLE I. Description of Schools/Communities and Classrooms Included in Study.

In respect to grade levels, experimental groups were paired with control groups in the same grade level. Since The New Model Me can be implemented appropriately in a number of grade levels, it is useful to report the percentage of students included in the study broken down by grade level:

| Implementation Level | Percentage of Subjects |
|---|---|
| Junior High (8th-9th) | 10% |
| 10th grade | 20% |
| 11th grade | 28% |
| 12th grade | 42% |

Objectives and Variables

Consistent with both the psycho-social and cognitive purposes of the curriculum, the objectives of the study were to determine if students who are exposed to The New Model Me would show positive gains in:

1. Knowledge of curriculum-related content as well as in content that might be found on a general test of psychological and social science concepts.
2. Attitudes toward self and significant others.
3. Reading comprehension and efficiency.

Specifically, the dependent variables chosen for study included student knowledge of The New Model Me content and attitudes emphasized in the curriculum, competence in comprehending literal detail as well as inferential and critical reading skills and efficiency in reading rapidly with understanding.

The independent variable was exposure to The New Model Me as determined by membership in the treatment group rather than in the comparison group. In addition, other variables were used to establish group equivalence and to enable the authors to further classify the treatment and comparison

groups. These variables were school, race, sex and the relevant pre-test score for each dependent variable.

Instruments and Methodology

To assess student knowledge of The New Model Me content, the Knowledge Examination, a test that had been used successfully with the first edition was revised for use with the second edition. The Knowledge Examination consists of 45 multiple choice items. In addition to revising the items of the test to reflect second edition content, the structure of the test was altered to represent both curriculum-specific items (SUB-TEST A) and items testing knowledge of social science and psychological content (SUB-TEST B) that might very well appear on a standardized test. An example of an item in Sub-Test A is Item #19:

19. "Diversity and "novelty" are ideas within the larger idea of

A. Future Shock
B. Self-esteem
C. Controls
D. Mass media

An example of an item in Sub-Test B is Item #39:

39. Which of the following is a value statement?

A. People are more frightened of crime today as compared to 25 years ago.
B. Criminals who use a gun when committing a crime should have five or ten years added to their sentences.
C. Within four or five years every household in the country will be hit by crime.
D. Criminals are more violent today than they were five years ago.

During the revision process, a pilot test was utilized to gather reliability data and through item analysis procedures weak items were strengthened or replaced.

After the round of pilot tests ended, the Knowledge Examination scores on all students' pre-tests were subjected to split-half reliability examination. After correcting for test length, the reliability of the knowledge test was found to be .89.

To assess student attitudes toward self and significant others, a second test, the Personal Attitude Survey (PAS), was revised and used with the second edition. The PAS consists of 50 declarative statements to which a student responds with (A) Agree, (B) Disagree, or (C) Uncertain. An example of an item expressing an attitude toward self is Item #12:

12. I am willing to accept the responsibility for my behavior.

An example of an item expressing an attitude toward a significant other is Item #50:

50. I blame my parents and teachers for a lot of my problems.

During the revision process, items reflecting attitudes toward curriculum impacted concerns were inserted into the PAS. Two examples of such items follow:

19. I get little enjoyment from reading.

20. People with disabilities are more like me than they are different.

As with the Knowledge Examination, pilot testing was used to strengthen the reliability of the PAS.

After pilot testing was completed, the Personal Attitude Survey was subjected to a split-half reliability test. The resulting coefficient, adjusted for test length, was .87.

Reading comprehension and efficiency were assessed through the administration of the Iowa Silent Reading Tests (ISRT), a long established test that surveys several reading behaviors. Consisting of four tests--"Vocabulary", "Reading Comprehension", "Directed Reading" and "Reading Efficiency", the ISRT "surveys the specific areas in which the student must

have developed competence in order to read effectively." The 1973 edition includes three grade level versions: Level 1 for grades 6 through 9; Level 2 for grades 9 through 14; and Level 3 for academically advanced upper level high school students and for college students." Specifically for use in this evaluation study, only the "Reading Comprehension" and "Reading Efficiency" subtests were administered. The test publisher reports that norms were established through testing a representative sample of 2,000 to 3,000 students at each test level. Alternate form , test-retest procedures were used to establish reliability estimates. These procedures resulted in K-R 21 coefficients of .83 for the Reading Comprehension Test and .77 for the test of Reading Efficiency. Reviews of the ISRT support the suitability of its use in this study.[3] One reviewer concluded that "the ISRT is an outstanding candidate and can be recommended for use." A second reviewer stated that "for assessment purposes, however, the ISRT series is, all things considered, an impressive addition to the current inventory of reading tests." The third reviewer wrote that, "In terms of technical competence, the publishers have maintained the highest measure of measurement standards in its preparation.

Results: Without Reference to Site

Because subjects were not assigned randomly to experimental and control conditions, initial group differences were evaluated. Experimental and control groups were compared on the variables of race, sex, reading efficiency, reading comprehension, the PAS, and the Knowledge Examination. The only initial difference between groups was found on the measure of reading efficiency. The control subjects were found to have a statistically significant advantage in mean scores over experimental subjects at the .01 alpha level. Therefore,

[3]See Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook, pp. 1195-1201.

in all post-test comparisons, analysis of covariance was employed, controlling for reading efficiency.

Table II reports all adjusted mean scores for experimental and control subjects and significance levels for differences for all dependent variables. It should be noted that all dependent variables resulted in significant differences favoring the experimental group, except for the attitude variable and reading efficiency measures, where no differences were found. It should also be pointed out that these significant differences reappeared when group differences were explored through traditional t-tests, with no adjustment of scores via analysis of covariance.

Further analyses were conducted in an attempt to isolate program effects due to reading ability. All subjects were divided into high and low reading comprehension groups on the basis of their pre-test scores. The combined mean was used to divide students into these groups.

Within the low reading comprehension group, there was no significant difference in post-test reading comprehension scores when experimental and control subjects were compared. However, within the high reading comprehension group, experimental subjects produced a significantly higher mean score on post-test reading comprehension compared to the control group mean ($\overline{X}$ = 35.6 and $\overline{X}$ = 29.9, respectively; t = 2.87, p .01).

Results: Site By Site Analysis

Although significant differences were found in the three knowledge variables and in reading comprehension when data from all sites were massed, these differences appeared at some sites and not in others. Certainly, with substantially fewer cases at each site, some diminution of statistical significance would be expected. However, when prior teaching of The New Model Me was used as a test

TABLE II

Results of Analysis of Covariance for all Dependent Variables with Reading Efficiency as Covariate

| Variable | Experimental Adjusted Mean | Control Adjusted Mean | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Efficiency | 21.41 | 22.78 | 1.26 | .261 |
| Reading Comprehension | 26.91 | 23.32 | 6.25 | .013 |
| Knowledge Examination | 25.57 | 18.81 | 38.50 | .0001 |
| Knowledge Examination (General) | 15.94 | 12.07 | 30.12 | .0001 |
| Knowledge Examination (Specific) | 9.63 | 6.74 | 42.38 | .0001 |
| PAS (Attitudes) | 30.64 | 29.23 | 1.07 | .301 |

to separate experimental group teachers into two conditions, interesting results were found.[4] These results are displayed in Table III.

TABLE III

Results By Evaluation Site With Prior

Teaching of The New Model Me

As Test Condition

| Taught Previously | | | Had Not Taught Previously | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Teachers | Number of Tests of Significance | Number of Times Significance was Reached | Number of Teachers | Number of Tests of Significance | Number of Times Significance was Reached |
| 5 | 30 | 18 | 5 | 30 | 5 |

The results shown in Table III are even more persuasive given the fact that of the five cases where significance was reached in the group that had not taught the curriculum prior to the study, three cases were in one teacher's classroom. That teacher was a former student of one of the authors of the program and might have exerted extraordinary efforts to implement the program fully and faithfully.

[4]The data from Site #8 could not be extracted from the computer at this time. Thus, the site analysis includes only ten teachers.

Discussion

The instructional program evaluated in this paper is a revised version of The New Model Me. In its original form, the program primarily stressed affective outcomes. The revisions resulting in the current edition used in this study were characterized by the introduction of several cognitive objectives. Some of these were specific to the program's content and some were of a more general social science nature. Additionally, the program sought to improve reading skills.

It is interesting that highly significant treatment effects emerged for the Knowledge Examination, but not for the PAS attitudinal measure. Further analysis of the Knowledge Examination revealed significant differences for both the general and curriculum-specific subtests.

The objective to achieve reading improvement through The New Model Me curriculum appears to have been met, also, at least in the dimension of reading comprehension.

The significant difference in post-test reading comprehension scores favoring the experimental group appears to reflect improvements made by stronger readers. Significant differences were found between experimental and control subjects classified as strong readers by the reading comprehension pre-test, but not for those scoring below the mean on the pre-test.

Finally, the site by site analysis revealed that where significance was reached it was more likely to be found in the classrooms taught by teachers who were exposed to the first edition of The New Model Me. Thus, the principle that familiarity with a given program is a solid predictor of success with a variant of it as in the case of a later edition was supported in this study.

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